

M: 13-47

Thomas and Henrietta Snowden House  
Clarksburg Vicinity  
Private

c. 1889

This two story log house with originally two rooms down and two up was the nucleus of a Black family's farmstead that was oriented towards self-sufficiency. In the animal places, gardens, orchards, and fields, the family raised much of their own food and stored it in the house and outbuildings. The lay-out of this small farm illustrates how traditional rural family life extended beyond the four walls of a house.

## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

M: 13-47

Mag1 #

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Thomas and Henrietta Snowden/Log house and Farmstead

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

North side of Piedmont Road

CITY, TOWN

Clarksburg

— VICINITY OF

8

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☒ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

No

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Madessa Snowden

Telephone #: 972-0972

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Piedmont Road

CITY, TOWN

Clarksburg

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code  
Maryland**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Registry of Deeds

Liber #: JA 13

Folio #: 78

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Montgomery County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

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### CONDITION

\_\_\_ EXCELLENT  
☒ GOOD  
\_\_\_ FAIR

\_\_\_ DETERIORATED  
\_\_\_ RUINS  
\_\_\_ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

\_\_\_ UNALTERED  
☒ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
\_\_\_ MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This two story log house stands on the north side of Piedmont Road. It has changed substantially in appearance since it was originally built because the logs have been covered over with composition siding and some of the outbuildings have been replaced or destroyed, and the farm land is no longer worked as it used to be. However, the house, its yards, and buildings do retain a significant portion of their original character, and stand in remarkable contrast to the new houses of the large subdivision that has been built nearby. See the photographs of the site today, which show its present context.

The house began as a modest log dwelling, but no one is still living who recalls its original appearance. According to Madessa Snowde -- the current owner, occupant, and widow of the son of the first Black owner -- this house has looked more or less as it does today since she first knew it in the 1920s. She learned that it was log only when repairs were done inside the house in recent years.

The facade of the house contains three bays, arranged in the typical pattern of bilateral symmetry. The principal block is one bay in depth. In the second quarter of the 20th century, a one and a half story ell was added to the rear length. A shed porch sheltered the entire front length, and is supported by turned posts with brackets, adding a decorative touch. The eaves of the gable roof are boxed with plain planks and have short returns at the gable ends. The roof is covered with galvanized tin. The windows have double hung sashes with two over two panes. This house is example of a far more finished log house than those in the Jerusalem and Sugarland communities. Compare this one also to the log house of Jeremiah Lyles, which was also surveyed among the Clarksburg houses.

In plan there were two rooms down and two up in the original block. The front door opened directly into the kitchen. A door through a partition led into the side room, which was the sitting room. Thus, the plan was traditional, hall and parlor.

A boxed stairway, underneath which was a closet, led to the bedrooms upstairs. Like the downstairs, there were wood burning stoves, which were piped into a brick stove flue, centrally located in the house. The room above the kitchen in the ell is a bedroom.

The most important feature of this house is its occupant, Madessa Snowden, since she remembers so clearly how life was lived here, especially the family's ongoing efforts to be self sufficient. Those attempts towards self sufficiency are revealed in her descriptions of how the buildings and places around the farmstead were used. Fortunately, an aerial photograph taken in the early 1960s of the farmstead has survived. It was copied as part of this survey. Refer to it for an understanding of the lay-out of this farm. Attached is a diagram based upon that photograph and the recollection of Mrs. Snowden.

According to Mrs. Snowden, there was a frame bank barn which was replaced in the 1960s by the present-day cinder block one. It housed the horses and cows on the farm. Attached to it was a hay barn. To the north-east of the bank barn was the smaller garden, called the "truck patch". White potatoes, corn, sweet potatoes, cucumbers, and watermelons were planted there. Between it and the bank barn was the corn house, located there for practical reasons.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

(continued on Attachment Sheet A)

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

M:13-47

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

c. 1829

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

According to the deed JA 13/78, this tract of 4 acres was purchased by Thomas Snowden from James and Sarah Purdum in 1889. The Purdums were large landowners in the Clarksburg community. The log house was probably built near the time of purchase. It is almost certain that it was not built afterwards, since family tradition maintains that the oldest son, Clifton Snowden, was born in this house, and he was born in 1889. Mrs. Snowden's husband, Frannie, was born here in 1903, she recalls.

According to Mrs. Snowden, her mother-in-law was named Henrietta Gray Snowden. Both Thomas and Henrietta Snowden, she thinks, were from the Clarksburg area.

As part of this survey, some of the Snowden family photographs were copied. These include family pictures of Madessa Snowden, whose maiden name was also Snowden, but she was from Frederick County and not of close kin to the Snowdens of Clarksburg. The identity of the photographs is as follows:

1. Young man in suit with large tie: Horace Snowden, father of Madessa Snowden.
2. Composite picture in frame: Horace Snowden in overalls and his wife Harriet Snowden seated in chair. Below are four snapshots of their daughter.
3. Man on horseback with team of horses: Thomas Snowden. According to Arthur Randolph, teams of horses harnessed to wagons like this were a common sight in the county.
4. Composite photograph: on the right, Frannie Snowden, his mother, Henrietta, and his brother Clifton. Another brother is in the center. In the bottom right is Clifton Snowden and family. The others in the photograph are unidentified members of the Thomas and Henrietta Snowden family.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

- 1) Land Records, Montgomery County Courthouse, Rockville, Md.
- 2) Oral interviews, not taped, with Madessa Snowden, Clarksburg, Md., Nov. 78, by George McDaniel.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

George W. McDaniel, Surveyor; Karen Sewell, Research Assistant

ORGANIZATION

Sugarloaf Regional Trails

DATE

Jan. 79

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Box 87

TELEPHONE

926-4510

CITY OR TOWN

Dickerson

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: ~~Maryland Historical Trust~~  
~~The Shaw House, 21 State Circle~~  
~~Annapolis, Maryland 21401~~  
~~(301) 267-1438~~

SUGARLOAF REGIONAL TRAILS  
 Box 87, Sugarloaf  
 Dickerson, MD 21042  
 (301) 746-4111

## Attachment Sheet A

## Description - Snowden-Log house and farmstead

To the northeast of the "truck patch" was the fenced-in hog lot with shelter and yard. According to Mrs. Snowden, she and her husband used to butcher at least five or six hogs a year and supplied their large family with plenty of meat. They cured the hams, shoulders, and side meat in the meat house. They made their own sausage, pudding, scrapple, and lard. Though Mrs. Snowden no longer raises her own hogs, she continues to participate in hog butcherings and makes her own pudding, sausages, etc. She prefers to cook with fresh, homemade lard with excellent results -- as this surveyor, who breakfasted with her -- can attest. A farm breakfast that she prepared for me -- eggs, homemade sausage, pudding, and pancakes -- was certainly filling for a day's work and quite delicious.

To the west of the hog pen was the poultry yard. Raising brooders was one of their specialties. In the large poultry yard, there was a brooder house where as many as 200 chicks were raised. After they were about 4 or 5 weeks old, Mrs. Snowden says they were transferred to another brooder house until they were about 7 or 8 weeks old. Finally they were moved to another house (#3 on the diagram), where they were fattened for a few days and then dressed out and sold to people in the community and to markets. In addition to these brooders, the Snowdens also raised and sold turkeys, geese, and ducks. The geese and ducks were not penned. As a result of their work, this family always had a ready supply of poultry meat and eggs for cooking and baking.

Around the house were orchards. There were peach trees, pear, and plum trees. Mrs. Snowden and her family gathered the fruit in the fall, "canned" them for the winter, and made preserves and jams.

To the west of the row of pear trees by the house was the "big garden". An incredible variety of vegetables was planted here, and the produce put up for the winter. Mrs. Snowden recalls that they raised corn, lima beans, string beans, carrots, beets, cabbage, kale, spinach, tomatoes, peppers, turnip greens, rape, mustard greens, lettuce, and strawberries. At the end of the summer, she recalls that she put as many as 100 quarts of string beans, 100 quarts of tomatoes, and 100 quarts of corn up for the winter. In the cellar she stored white potatoes in a bin. Since the sweet potatoes would rot, she canned them, she remembers.

Adding to all this, it is amazing that she was also able to make as many as 25 cakes a week and 35 dozen rolls and sell them to people in the community.

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that while Franny and Madessa Snowden had no direct offspring themselves, they raised a total of thirty foster children on this farm. They usually had five children at a time, and they all worked on the farm. This productive farm of only 4 acres was a truly cooperative venture, and a great testimony to the hard work, faith, and skills of Frannie and Madessa Snowden.







# Fanny Snowden's family

Top Rt: Fanny Snowden & his  
mother, Edda Snowden

center: ~~Clifton Snowden, brother~~  
another Snowden brother

Bottom Rt: Clifton Snowden, brother

Clarksburg, Md.

sum

11/28  
13-47

M- ~~13-10-14~~



Madessa Snowden's family!

Top L. Horace Snowden, father

Top Rt- Harriet Snowden, mother

Bottom - Snowden sisters

13-47  
M-13-10-14

Clarksburg, Md.

11/78 Gum



Horace Snowden

Father of Madessa Snowden Snowden  
wife of Franny Snowden

copy of the family photo

Clarksburg Md.

Sum 11/78

13-47

M- ~~13-10-14~~



Thomas Snowden

father of Fanny Snowden

13-47

~~M-13-10-14~~

Clarksburg Md.

11/78

gwm





Thomas Snowden House

Facade: South length

m - 13 <sup>13-4-7</sup> ~~10-14~~

H 12/79

sum

Clarksburg, Md.

1-21134 #20